

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 and receipt of certified copies of all priority documents for the present application. Additionally, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging receipt and consideration of the references submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 5, 2001.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1-3 and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over KOIDE (U.S. Patent No. 5,181,137) in view of MARUYAMA (U.S. Patent No. 6,346,957). Claims 4-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over KOIDE in view of MARUYAMA, and further in view of TANAKA et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,473,105). Claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over KOIDE in view of MARUYAMA and TANAKA, and further in view of KAMIKUBO (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,164).

Upon entry of the present Response, Applicants will have amended claims 1-4. In this regard, Applicants note that claims 1-4 have been amended in order to more clearly recite features of the present application. Claims 13 and 14 will have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claim 15 will have been added for the consideration of the Examiner.

The outstanding Official Action asserted that KOIDE discloses the "multi-beam scanning device" recited in claim 1, including "the numbers of the reflection surfaces of all

of said optical path turning systems being odd numbers (three reflection surfaces for each of the light beams)". However, according to the invention recited in amended claim 1, all of the optical path turning systems in the claimed multi-beam scanning device include "an even number of reflection surfaces". Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that KOIDE does not disclose or suggest the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1, i.e., "all of said optical path turning systems including an even number of reflection surfaces". In this regard, Applicants note that the outstanding Official Action explicitly admits that such a feature is not disclosed in KOIDE because three reflection surfaces are provided for each of the light beams.

Applicants further submit that the above-noted feature of amended claim 1 is not disclosed or suggested in any other reference applied in the outstanding Official Action. In this regard, MARUYAMA also provides three reflection surfaces (i.e., an odd number) for each light beam. Further, TANAKA discloses that one beam is reflected once, while the other beam is reflected twice. Further, KAMIKUBO is not directed to a multi-beam scanning device, and therefore does not disclose or suggest any feature relevant to the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted feature of amended claim 1 is not disclosed by any of the references applied in the outstanding Official Action.

Further, as described at paragraph [0108] of the present application, the number of the

reflection surfaces of all turning optical systems should be even or odd in order to suppress the influence of bows on the object. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1 is not merely a design choice; rather, the above-noted feature provides benefits that are not provided in a multi-beam scanning device missing such a feature. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation to modify, e.g., KOIDE and/or MARUYAMA with features of TANAKA to obtain an even number of reflection surfaces, because such a modification would destroy the teachings of KOIDE, MARUYAMA and TANAKA. In this regard, KOIDE and MARUYAMA explicitly and intentionally disclose 3 reflection surfaces, whereas TANAKA explicitly and intentionally discloses different number of reflection surfaces for each optical path turning system. In any case, as noted above, TANAKA does not disclose that all optical path turning systems have the same number of reflecting surfaces, let alone that all such systems have an odd or even number of reflection surfaces.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references applied by the Examiner discloses or suggests the invention recited in claim 1, at least because none of the references discloses or suggests that all of the optical path turning systems include an even number of reflection surfaces. Accordingly, for each and all of the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claim 1.

Applicants additionally submit that claims 2-12 and 15 are allowable, at least for

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depending, directly or indirectly, from an allowable independent claim 1, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations. For example, claim 15 recites that "each of said optical path turning systems has the same number of reflection surfaces", which is also not disclosed or suggested in, e.g., TANAKA.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of each of claims 1-4, as well as an indication of the allowability of each of the claims now pending, in view of the above-noted amendments and remarks.

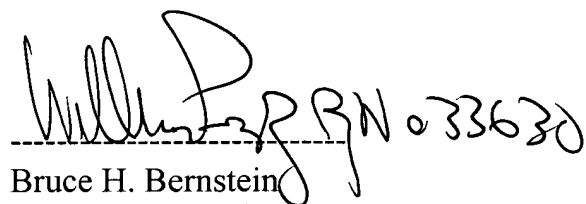
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have added new claims and amended the existing claims to better define the invention. Applicants have discussed the features recited in Applicants' claims and have shown how these features are not taught, disclosed nor rendered obvious by the reference cited by the Examiner.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions or comments, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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